

can match. Equally important, she has served as a mentor to numerous young officers throughout her career, inculcating them with the Air Force's core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence.

Colonel Lockhart received her commission in 1982 through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at the College of Holy Cross. As a freshly minted 2nd Lieutenant, she attended meteorology school for a year, where she began to build the skills necessary for a successful career in the Air Weather Service. Shortly after arriving to her first duty station at Griffiss AFB, NY she was recognized for her initiative, intellect, and quick grasp of the operational requirements. She was given responsibilities generally reserved for more senior weather officers in SAC and NORAD, and continued to establish herself as an exceptional meteorologist. As a 1st Lieutenant, she was credited with improving the overall readiness of her squadron and wing, and protecting valuable resources with her accurate forecasts and astute weather warnings. She was routinely tasked to handle the most delicate and time sensitive weather briefings to missile warning and space surveillance centers. In 1986, Colonel Lockhart transferred from active duty to the Air Force Reserve as a Captain, and continued to serve in the weather field as an Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) at Peterson AFB, CO. Her active duty experience would prove invaluable as a new Reservist who would go on to provide years of support to the Air Force's active, guard, and reserve components in a variety of positions and assignments.

As an IMA weather officer, she helped develop combat plans to support strategic, conventional, and special operations, to include leading weather forces for a deployment of KC-135 aircraft during Operation DESERT STORM. As a Major assigned to Eglin AFB, FL, she was handpicked to provide specialized on-site support to two high-visibility Space Shuttle landings at Edwards AFB, CA. While serving as an IMA Weather Officer at McConnell AFB, KS, she provided operational forecast, weather advisories, watches and warnings to a major refueling wing, and the Kansas and Oklahoma Air National Guard. Colonel Lockhart became an expert and innovator in the electro-optics arena, provided exceptional weather support during Hurricane Opal, and prepared critical climatology packages for the wing's F-16 deployments around the world. While assigned to an operations support squadron at Nellis AFB, NV, Col Lockhart commanded a weather flight that provided 24-hour weather support to the HQ Air Warfare Center and two of Air Combat Command's busiest and complex wings. Her successes and expertise led to her being selected as the first weather officer assigned to the Air Force's Weapons School. There, she helped to integrate and establish 21st century combat weather support into the warfighter's contingency operations. She was tasked to model critical targets post 9/11, maintain direct contact with Operation ENDURING FREEDOM deployed units and aircrew, and cited as the most operations oriented, bombs-on-target-on-time weather officer ever assigned to her wing. Colonel Lockhart was asked to bring her experience and natural diplomatic talents to Washington, D.C. to serve as the IMA to the Chief of the Air Force House Liaison Office on Capitol Hill.

Over the past four years Colonel Lockhart has carried out the delicate tasks of managing the House Liaison Office while her active duty colleagues have traveled on CODELs and deployed. She has been an important part of building strong relationships between Capitol Hill, the Pentagon, and senior Air Force leadership. Colonel Lockhart is trusted and relied upon by Members of Congress and their staffs to help facilitate legislative and programmatic matters. We have benefited greatly from her kind, professional, and capable ways.

Throughout Colonel Lockhart's career, her commanders have referred to her as, "the brightest junior officer on my staff", "brilliant", "superior and visionary leader", and "Total Force ace." Simply stated, Colonel Mary Lockhart has made lasting and important contributions to the United States Air Force. Our Nation is indebted to her and her family for their selfless years of service and unquestioned devotion to peace and security at home and abroad. Mr. Speaker, I wish Mary, her husband Paul, and daughters Jenna and Marisa, Godspeed and much happiness as she begins her retirement from the United States Air Force.

#### RECOGNIZING RONNIE CHIH-CHIEN LU

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise, along with the other co-chairs of the Congressional Taiwan Caucus—Representative SHELLEY BERKLEY, Representative MARIO DIAZ-BALART, and Representative PHIL GINGREY—to recognize the service of Ronnie Chih-chien Lu. Mr. Lu is the outgoing Senior Officer in the Congressional Liaison Division of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office, TECRO. Mr. Lu is returning to Taiwan for his next assignment as a diplomat. During his service as the TECRO contact for the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Congressional Caucus on Taiwan, Mr. Lu has served as an invaluable resource for us.

In 2005, Mr. Lu was hand-picked to serve as a congressional liaison for TECRO. During his almost 7 year tenure in this position, Mr. Lu oversaw Congressional Delegation visits for over 30 Members of the House of Representatives and organized 12 Congressional Staff Delegation visits to Taiwan. Mr. Lu was also part of the TECRO team that worked toward the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 55, which commemorated the 30th Anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979. He also worked to garner support for House Concurrent Resolution 266 (H. Con. Res. 266), which called for Taiwan's active participation in the International Civil Aviation Organization. H. Con. Res. 266 passed the House of Representatives in 2010.

Mr. Lu has served in Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2000. Early in his diplomatic career, he served in both the Department of Protocol and Department of African Affairs. Mr. Lu received a Master of Arts degree from National Chengchi University in Taiwan.

Though he secured many legislative victories for Taiwan while he served in Wash-

ington, DC, he made even more long-lasting relationships. My colleagues and our staff are proud to call him a friend, and we hope to see him back in Washington, DC one day.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall 222, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

#### RECOGNIZING THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

#### HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize our strong friendship and strategic alliance with the Republic of Turkey.

Turkey has continuously stood with the United States in our efforts to promote democracy and freedom throughout the world. As a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, Turkey has committed troops and necessary resources to efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan through the years, and serves as a crucial transit point for supplies and personnel going to these countries. Additionally, Turkey announced last year that it would lead the International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, regional command in Kabul for a third year. Turkey is also at the beginning operational stages of a NATO radar facility in its southeast region as part of a missile defense system intended to protect NATO allies from ballistic missiles.

In addition to cooperation on NATO-led efforts, Turkey plays a critical role in promoting democracy throughout the region. Over the last year, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has traveled throughout Egypt, Tunisia, and other countries affected by uprisings to encourage secular constitutions and democratic reforms that are vital to U.S. interests. Turkey has also taken a leading role in addressing the ongoing situation in Syria, opening its borders to tens of thousands of Syrian refugees and encouraging Arab countries to lead a coordinated effort to find a peaceful resolution in Syria.

Turkey continues to increase efforts to support religious minorities in its own borders as well. Last August, Turkey issued a decree for the return of hundreds of properties, including cemeteries, hospitals, and schools, to non-Muslim communities. This announcement also provides compensation to the non-Muslim community foundations for properties currently registered to third parties. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton applauded Turkey's efforts to "take serious steps to improve the climate for religious tolerance."

Turkey remains a vital ally of the United States, and I am encouraged by the steps that Turkey has taken to improve its own commitment to democracy and to promote democracy throughout the Middle East. Turkey has